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From: energy@morningconsult.cpro30.com
Sent: Thur 8/13/2015 12:20:42 PM
Subject: Morning Consult Energy, Presented by the American Coalition for Clean Coal Electricity: EPA Halting Mine Investigations; Exxon Mobil Settles Over 2013 Charges

by Colleen Leahy (@cocoblerg)

Today's Washington Brief

- The Environmental Protection Agency has halted all field investigations of abandoned mines like the one that led to last week's Animas River spill in Colorado. There are around 500 thousand abandoned mines around the country. EPA did not say how many mine investigations are currently being conducted. ([the New York Times](#))
- More states are suing EPA – this time, over a rule the agency passed in June regarding the regulation of power plant emissions during startup and shutdown. The 17 states, led by Florida, claim EPA wrongly concluded that the states' plans to reduce pollution were insufficient. ([E&E](#))
- Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) doesn't have much of a track record on environmental justice, which seeks to mitigate the impacts of climate change on poor and minority populations. He's looking to change that. Last week, Sanders introduced an amendment that asks Congress to acknowledge increased health risks of air pollution faced by African-Americans, Hispanics and other minorities. ([National Journal](#))

Today's Business Brief

- Sixty billion in spending cuts this year is not going to be enough. Some analysts say big oil will need to slash billions more in investments and continue to cut spending in order to cope with "lower for longer" prices. ([Bloomberg](#))
- Hong Kong-based Shunfeng International Clean Energy will take a majority stake – 63 percent – in U.S. solar panel manufacturer Suniva. Investing in U.S. solar will allow the company to avoid U.S. taxes on Chinese-made panels. ([Reuters](#))

- A federal court yesterday approved of Exxon Mobil's settlement over 2013 charges that it violated the Clean Water Act and state laws in an oil spill in Arkansas. The company will pay just over \$5 million.
[\(Reuters\)](#)

Today's Chart Review

Crude Oil Joins Beer and Whisky in Alberta's 30-Loonie Club
from Bloomberg by Dan Murtaugh and Rebecca Penty

Mark Your Calendars (All Eastern Times)

Thursday

USEA [presentation](#): Grid-Scale Energy Storage: Politics, Promise, and Potential, @10am
Heritage Foundation [discussion](#): Assessing the Iran Nuclear Agreement: Placing Sanctions in Context, @10am

Friday

No events today.

General

Animas River lawsuit against EPA 'on the table,' Colorado AG says
from the Denver Post by Jesse Paul

Colorado Attorney General Cynthia Coffman said Wednesday that a lawsuit against the Environmental Protection Agency is "certainly on the table" the Environmental Protection Agency is "certainly on the table" after a massive wastewater spill caused by the agency last week fouled the Animas River.

After Colorado Waste Spill, E.P.A. Halts Field Investigations
from the New York Times by Julie Turkewitz

The Environmental Protection Agency is seeking an independent review of a spill on Aug. 5 that released more than three million gallons of toxic waste.

Greens seek ban on natural gas exports
from The Hill by Timothy Cama

Three environmental groups formally petitioned the Obama administration to immediately ban all exports of natural gas. The request challenges the recent tenfold increase in exports of natural gas, mainly as liquefied natural gas (LNG).

17 states launch legal assault against startup-shutdown rule
from E&E by Amanda Peterka

Seventeen states are challenging U.S. EPA's recent rule that changed the way states are required to address excess air pollution that occurs during plant startups and shutdowns or industrial equipment malfunctions.

Bernie Sanders: Environmental-Justice Champion
from National Journal by Clare Foran

Sanders has built a reputation as an outspoken environmentalist. But the senator is not particularly well-known as a defender of environmental justice, a grassroots movement that seeks to shield low-income and minority communities from the worst impacts of air pollution and environmental degradation. That may be about to change.

Pope's climate push at odds with U.S. Catholic oil investments
from Reuters by Richard Valdmanis

Some of the largest American Catholic organizations have millions of dollars invested in energy companies, from hydraulic fracturing firms to oil sands producers, according to their own disclosures, through many portfolios intended to fund church operations and pay clergy salaries.

U.S. Index Futures Advance as China Eases Devaluation Concerns
from Bloomberg by Camila Russo

U.S. stock-index futures climbed, signaling equities will track a rebound in global markets, after the Chinese central bank indicated it will support the yuan.

Oil & Natural Gas

Oil price up on US stock draws
from CNBC by Reuters

Oil prices rose on Thursday as lower U.S. crude stocks and optimistic global demand projections overrode concerns about a glut of supply.

Oil Majors' \$60 Billion Cuts Don't Go Far Enough as Crude Slides
from Bloomberg by Rakteem Katakey

The \$60 billion of oil-industry spending cuts this year won't be enough as crude languishes near a six-year low.

Oil at \$30 Is No Problem for Some Bakken Drillers Cutting Costs
from Bloomberg by Dan Murtaugh

Some parts of North Dakota's Bakken shale play are profitable at less than \$30 a barrel as companies tap bigger wells and benefit from lower drilling costs, according to a Bloomberg Intelligence analysis. That's less than half the level of some estimates when the oil rout began last year.

Alaska warned over natural gas plans
from Washington Examiner by John Siciliano

Oil giant Alaska could find itself on the ropes if it doesn't find a way to exploit its huge natural gas wealth in time to compete with rivals aiming for the Asian energy market.

Can Shell afford Arctic oil?
from the Guardian by Karl Mathiesen

The company has reportedly spent \$7bn (£4.5bn) on getting to this point, including replacing its prize Kulluk rig after it ran aground off Alaska in 2012. For them to gain any of this back, a number of things need to happen.

Judge approves Exxon Mobil settlement over 2013 Arkansas spill
from Reuters by Jonathan Stempel

A federal judge on Wednesday approved Exxon Mobil Corp's \$5.07 million settlement of charges that it violated the federal Clean Water Act and state environmental laws in connection with a 2013 oil spill in central Arkansas.

Iran Targets 45 Oil and Gas Projects in Plan to Boost Production
from Bloomberg by Hashem Kalantari

Iran has selected 45 oil and gas projects to show international companies at a conference in London in December when new oil contract models will be discussed ahead of exploration auctions to double the country's crude output.

Utilities and Infrastructure

Why the utility transformation will require vision, planning, and new revenue models

from Utility Dive by Robert Walton

Technology is out ahead of business models and regulations—and they need to catch up, according to Black & Veatch.

Climate

What to Know About the Record-Breaking Levels of Toxic Algae Lapping Up on the West Coast

from National Journal by Brian Resnick

Along the Pacific Coast, stretching thousands of miles from Alaska to California, is a massive, record-breaking bloom of toxic algae. Fueled by unusually warm water in the Pacific, the algae species Pseudo-nitzschia have grown in unprecedented concentrations. The problem with the toxic algae isn't that a person may get sick by just swimming in waters. The domoic acid the algae produce accumulates in the food chain. Species of fish and shellfish can handle high concentrations of the acid, but the mammals that feed upon them cannot.

Walruses in the Arctic are running out of sea ice this year — again

from the Washington Post by Chelsea Harvey

Diminishing sea ice in the Chukchi sea could be pointing toward another massive walrus haul-out in Alaska, which is dangerous for the animals.

Renewables

Shunfeng takes majority stake in U.S. solar manufacturer Suniva

from Reuters by Nichola Groom

Shunfeng International Clean Energy Ltd said it will take a majority stake in U.S. solar panel manufacturer Suniva to gain a foothold in the fast-growing U.S. solar market.

Nuclear

Group wants Georgia Power profits trimmed over nuclear plant

from My San Antonio by Ray Henry

Regulators should cut Georgia Power's profits as the cost of its new nuclear plant rises, making it a less-attractive financial deal for the public, an environmental group

said.

Coal

Clean Power Plan ratchets up burdens on coal states from E&E by Jean Chemnick and Emily Holden

The result of the new math is stricter goals for the coal-reliant Midwest, Appalachian and Rust Belt regions — areas that weren't fans of EPA's bid to curb emissions anyway. Meanwhile, states with cleaner power fleets got some relief.

Opinions, Editorials & Perspectives

Is The 'War On Coal' Political Or Economic? from Forbes by Ken Silverstein

With the U.S. presidential debates already underway so too are the advertising campaigns — especially in coal country, where the anti-Obama sentiment is in full stride among nearly all declared candidates. Their message: an unabated 'War on Coal' continues, which fails, however, to tell the whole story.

A Message from the American Coalition for Clean Coal Electricity:

EPA's final rule on carbon regulations is the last thing 59 million low-and middle-income Americans need. These rules pack a double punch with consumers facing double digit electricity price increases and reduced electricity supply. The President and environmental activists claim to be fighting for the disfranchised, but their out-of-touch policies only bring higher prices for those who can least afford them. Learn why EPA's new rule fails American families.

Research Reports, Issue Briefs & Case Studies

Japan restarts first nuclear reactor under new safety rules from the Energy Information Administration

On August 11, Kyushu Electric Power Company's 846 megawatt (MW) Sendai Nuclear Power Station Unit 1 became the first reactor to restart after nearly two years with no generation from nuclear power plants in Japan. Following the disaster at Fukushima in 2011, Japan began a temporary shutdown of all nuclear power plants as each reactor entered scheduled maintenance and refueling outages. By September 2013, all 54 reactors in Japan's nuclear fleet were shut down. Following its restart, Sendai Unit 1 will begin generating electricity within days and return to normal operation in early September.

A Message from the American Coalition for Clean Coal Electricity:

Elected officials, environmental experts and world renowned legal experts agree – EPA's final carbon rule is illegal and too expensive. Despite these facts, President Obama and EPA are pushing ahead with this costly rule that unleashes both sky-high energy cost increases for consumers and irreversible damage to the reliability of America's electric grid. Get the facts on how this latest rule will devastate 59 million low-and middle-income families across the country.



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